



**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**"To-Be" Trust Business Model**  
**Process Template**

**Title: Close Probate Case**

*Identify the process in the "Verb Noun" format. (Ex: Maintain Ownership)*

**Process Number**

**O.3.3** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Process Definition** *Provide an overview of the process and define its starting and ending points*

<b>1.1 Starts With</b>	When the judge releases the decision for implementation.
<b>1.2 Process Overview</b>	<p>When the judge releases the decision for implementation the probate specialist is electronically notified when ownership changes are made and funds distributed. When the decision is fully implemented the hardcopy probate is marked closed and filed.</p> <p>Identify problems with this process that may be resolved through BRDM (B.5.1 Conduct Outreach Activities and B.5.2 Post Outreach Activities). Provide support and/or participate in outreach activities.</p>
<b>1.3 Stops With</b>	Filing the hardcopy probate file as closed.

**2. Trust Business Objectives** *Identify the Comprehensive Trust Management Plan strategic goals and business objectives to which this process contributes.*

<b>Goal/Objective</b>
2.1 Expand self-governance compacts and self-determination contracts. Foster expansion of self-governance compacts and self-determination contracts in a manner consistent with DOI's fiduciary responsibilities.
3.2. Probate and estate administration. Consistently prioritize and quickly resolve probate and estate administration cases to effectively meet asset management and beneficiary service requirements.
3.3. Title, realty, and administrative information. Develop, maintain, and make readily available accurate and current asset ownership and administrative information managed to professional fiduciary standards

**3. How should Beneficiaries be involved in this process?**

<b>Beneficiary Involvement</b>



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**4. Organizations, Offices and Roles.** Identify the organizations that should be involved in performing the process.

**4.1 DOI Organizations.** Identify the DOI organizations, offices and roles that contribute to this process. DOI organizations include the Office of the Secretary, BIA, OST, BLM, MMS, OHA, OSM among others. Offices include Central Offices, Regional Offices, Agency(Field) Offices, etc. Using the CTM, Appendix D, identify and describe each role that contributes to the execution of the process.

Organization	Office	Role	Contribution
OST	Beneficiary Relationship Development and Management		Open new heir IIM account if necessary. Also, provide new beneficiary education on DOI and their responsibilities as a owner of trust assets.  Identify problems with the process that may be resolved through BRDM outreach activities. Provide support and/or participate in the outreach activity.
OST	Financial Operations		Distribute funds.  Identify problems with the process that may be resolved through BRDM outreach activities. Provide support and/or participate in the outreach activity.
BIA	Title		Review, record and process ownership changes.  Identify problems with the process that may be resolved through BRDM outreach activities. Provide support and/or participate in the outreach activity.
BIA	Land and Natural Resource Use and Management		Update beneficial ownership for leases.  Identify problems with the process that may be resolved through BRDM outreach activities. Provide support and/or participate in the outreach activity.



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Organization	Office	Role	Contribution
BIA	Probate		Confirm all funds have been distributed, ownership changes made and beneficial ownership changes to any leases made  Identify problems with the process that may be resolved through BRDM outreach activities. Provide support and/or participate in the outreach activity.
Tribes	Applicable Tribal office.		For compacted and contracting Tribes that have assumed this responsibility, the Tribe performs all DOI functions except those considered inherently federal.  Identify problems with the process that may be resolved through BRDM outreach activities. Provide support and/or participate in the outreach activity.

**4.2 Non-DOI Organizations.** Identify the non-DOI organizations that support the execution or contribute to this process.

Non-DOI Organization	Contribution

**5. Event(s)** Identify the events or conditions that start the process. Describe each event and indicate the frequency (daily, monthly, quarterly, etc.) in which each event is expected to occur. An event may be an external interaction (a beneficiary submits an application), the expiration of a period of time (a lease is due to expire in 90 days), or the realization of some pre-defined threshold (an IIM account reaches the automatic disbursement threshold).

Event	Description	Estimated Frequency
Appeal period expires without an appeal being filed.	Appeal period expires and no appeal has been filed.	? / year



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Event	Description	Estimated Frequency
No request for a hearing from the mailed records based decision.	No hearing was requested during the time allowed to request a hearing for the mailed records based decision and the decision is released for execution.	

**6. Inputs and Outputs.** Identify and describe all inputs and outputs related to this process. Inputs are information or materials used during the execution of the process; outputs are materials or information produced by the process.

**6.1 Inputs**

Input	Description
Final Decision	Tickler sent to the home agency when the appeal period expires without an appeal being filed.
Electronic confirmation	Automatic confirmation for the home agency when actions are taken to execute the decision (Conveyances made and funds distributed)

**6.2 Outputs**

Output	Description
Closed Probate Case	When all actions are taken to fully execute the decision the probate is filed as closed.



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## 7. Fiduciary and Legal Obligations and Controls

### 7.1 Obligations

Identify and describe the legal and fiduciary obligations that impact this process. For each obligation, indicate the document or commitment that defines the obligation and the citation (paragraph or section) within the document that pertains to this process.

Obligation	Source	Business Impact
25 CFR 15		Change and combine with 43 CFR 4 to accommodate the new process.
43 CFR 4		Change and combine with 25 CFR 15 to accommodate the new process.
25 CFR Part 17		Action of will on Osage
25 CFR Part 16		Estates of Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes
5 USC 552 (FOIA)		Freedom of Information Act
5 USC 552a (Privacy Act)		Provides for the protection and accuracy of information about individuals.
5 USC 554 – 557		Administrative Procedures Act (APA) to ensure due process during the probate process.
Babbitt v. Youpee		The court decision finding ILCA unconstitutional because heirs of trust property that was escheated to Tribes were not compensated. This has and will continue to have a significant impact on probate.
Indian Land Consolidation Act (ILCA) of 1984, Amended 2000		The Indian Land Consolidation Act was passed to prevent further fractionation and to consolidate fractional interests in allotted lands. When there are no eligible heirs, land can be purchased by a co-owner or by the tribe in an effort to reduce fractionation and emphasize tribal sovereignty. ILCA also, in defining the term Indian, redefines who is eligible to hold land in Trust and cash. Has not been implemented and may be replaced by another amendment to ILCA.
25 USC 372 - General Allotment Act		Sec. 372. Ascertainment of heirs of deceased allottees; settlement of estates; sale of lands; deposit of Indian moneys  If we want to include land in the expedited probate this might have to be changed (provide notice and hearing).



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Obligation	Source	Business Impact
25 USC 355		Five Civilized Tribes act that commits the probates to state district court. May be amended by a proposed Five Nations Citizens Land Reform Act which would make DOI responsible for the probate of Five Nation beneficiaries trust/restricted estates.
25 USC 331		Osage authority to do Inter vivos trusts and state court to do Osage probates.
25 USC 373		Disposal by will of allotments held under trust.
25 USC 373(a)		Disposition of trust or restricted estate of intestate without heirs; successor tribe; sale of land.
25 USC 373(b)		Descent and distribution for restricted estate or homestead on the public domain
25 USC 372a		Heirs by adoption
25 USC 374		Attendance of witnesses – authority for judges to require attendance of witnesses at hearings to determine the heirs of decedents, held in accordance with sections 372 and 373.
25 USC 375		Determination of heirship of deceased members of Five Civilized Tribes
25 USC 375(a)		Jurisdiction of Secretary of the Interior over probate and distribution of estates not exceeding \$2,500 for the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma.
25 USC 375(c)		Disbursement of sums not exceeding \$500 to heirs or legatees for the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma.
25 USC 375(d)		Disposition of estates of intestate members of Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole Nations of Oklahoma dying without heirs. Land will escheat back to the Tribe with jurisdiction.
25 USC 376		After August 1, 1914, any officer or employee appointed or designated by the Secretary of the Interior or the Commissioner of Indian Affairs as special examiner in heirship cases shall be authorized to administer oaths in investigations committed to him: Does not apply to Osage Indians nor to the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians in Oklahoma.



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Obligation	Source	Business Impact
25 USC 378		Partition of allotment among heirs - If the Secretary of the Interior shall find that any inherited trust allotment or allotments are capable of partition to the advantage of the heirs, he may cause such lands to be partitioned among them, regardless of their competency, patents in fee to be issued to the competent heirs for their shares and trust patents to be issued to the incompetent heirs for the lands respectively or jointly set apart to them, the trust period to terminate in accordance with the terms of the original patent or order of extension of the trust period set out in said patent.
25 USC 379		Sale of allotted lands by heirs.
25 USC 356		Allowance of undisputed claims of restricted allottees of Five Civilized Tribes- No undisputed claims to be paid from individual moneys of restricted allottees, or their heirs, or uncontested agricultural and mineral leases (excluding oil and gas leases) made by individual restricted Indian allottees, or their heirs, shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for approval, but all such undisputed claims or uncontested leases (except oil and gas leases) shall be paid, approved, rejected, or disapproved by the Superintendent for the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma: Provided, however, That any party aggrieved by any decision or order of the Superintendent for the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma may appeal from the same to the Secretary of the Interior within thirty days from the date of said decision or order.
Tribal Probate Codes	Tribal Law	Approved Tribal Probate codes to be used in distributing trust assets in an estate.
Uniform Indian Probate Code	Law	One Indian Probate Code that supercedes all state codes now used.



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**7.2 Controls**

Identify and describe any controls (enforcement mechanisms) that may be used to ensure that the process adheres to obligations and internal process requirements. Controls may be reviews, audits, segregated duties, etc. Indicate the reason that each control should be introduced (name the obligation that a control is intended to enforce; indicate any controls required to ensure consistency or reliability).

Control	Reason	Description
Appeal Process	Constitutionally guaranteed due process	Could result in a different decision than issued in the original hearing.
BIA Title Review	Reviews for accuracy when received	When the decision is received from Office of Trust Adjudication the ownership changes undergo a review at the LTRO.
Financial Operations Review	Reviews for accuracy when received.	When the decision is received at OTFM for funds distribution they review the distribution for accuracy.
Conveyances Review	Receive and Review for application request	If the decision results in a conveyance, the conveyance process will review for accuracy of the documents required to make the conveyance.

**8. Mechanisms (Systems of Record)** identify the mechanisms, or systems, that are needed to support the process (ex: Ownership, Leasing, Workflow Management, Office Filing System, etc.). Indicate the information and activities, relevant to this process, that each system supports.

System Name	Support
Integrated Data	Information system containing all trust data
Estate Probate Program	Workflow management tool that guides user through a probate. It is capable of prompting the user to ask additional questions based on previous answers supplied and/or requesting the proper documentation to verify answers given. It is capable of generating any forms/letters needed to probate the estate and generates a proposed decision based on the input. It is a seamless tool that flows from one sub process to the next electronically.
Imaging Equipment	To make electronic files and micro-film of all hardcopy files at the submitting offices.
Mailing Equipment	To expedite large mailings.
Hardcopy Records	Original probate records used to develop the electronic files.





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**9. Inter-Process Relationships** Identify other trust processes that are related to this process (either predecessors or successors). If applicable, indicate the condition under which the processes are related.

**9.1 Predecessors.** Predecessors are processes that either produce information required by this process or that result in the need to execute this process.

Process No.	Name	Condition of Relationship
O.3.2.4	Finalize Decision	Release of the probate decision for implementation when the appeal period expires with not request for an appeal.
O.3.2.5	Consider Appeals	If the judge's decision is to deny a re-hearing.

**9.2 Successors.** Successors are processes that either use information produced by this process or that must be executed as a result of performing this process.

Process No.	Name	Condition of Relationship
O.1.1	Receive and Review Application Request	When a conveyance is required to execute the final decision.
O.4.1	Record Approved Title Document	Record ownership changes.
FO.1	Receipt of Funds	Provide FO process the names of the heirs to receive funds.
FO.3	Disbursements	When Probate is closed, notify FO process of funds to be disbursed to heirs.
B.5.1	Conduct Outreach Activity	When probate staff identifies a problem with the Prepare Probate Case that can be resolved by a BRDM outreach they will work with BRDM to develop an outreach activity.
B.5.2	Post Outreach Activity	After an outreach activity the probate staff will analyze the effectiveness of the activity.
B.6.1	Provide Counsel on Asset Options	Provide estate planning to new heirs.



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Process No.	Name	Condition of Relationship
B.6.3.1	Beneficiary Account Administration	Open new IIM accounts for new heirs when necessary.

**10. Comments** Summarize any discussion, problems, issues or recommendations that should be considered when reviewing process performance. Category Values (Note, Best Practice, Decision, Problem, Issue, Recommendation)

Category	Comment